

Tuesday April 30th 2024

# VOICE 4 PARENTS

NEWSLETTER



'giving a voice to parents & carers of children with additional needs'



Time to Connect

Our next Autism Café will run on 18th May 2024 then 15th June 2024

It will be held @ Vanilla Coffee shop, 6a School Road, Tettenhall WV68EJ as always,

There are games and complimentary crisps and squash for the children as well as the chance for refreshments and cake treats at subsidised prices for our families. Everyone Welcome

Check out our facebook page:

[Time to Connect - Autism Cafe | Wolverhampton | Facebook](#)

or visit our V4P website to learn more:

[Time to Connect - Autism Cafe | Voice4Parents Wolves \(voice4parents-wolves.co.uk\)](#)

Please e-mail [Emma@voice4parents.co.uk](mailto:Emma@voice4parents.co.uk)

## Coffee Morning

Our Coffee Mornings are back!

We have been delighted to welcome our existing and new members back to our coffee mornings this month. The turnout has been brilliant and it was great to see so many of you. Thank You!



Everyone is welcome—so please come along, have a cuppa and meet people that just get it!

Dates for your diary:, 7th may, 4th June, 9th July, 10th September, 8th October, 5th November and 3rd December 2024.

Look out for more dates to be added soon!

Our Coffee Mornings will run @ Low Hill Strengthening Families Hub, Fourth Ave, WV10 9LZ

10–12PM.

## Transport Questionnaire

CASBA are doing some research around public transport and have designed a questionnaire. We know transport in general is a problem for a lot of us given the challenges associated with our disabilities, but we know public transport in particular presents a whole realm of challenges.

CASBA have designed a short questionnaire, for anyone wanting to share their valuable feedback to go towards their research.

<https://forms.gle/kL3zfKZS1SaHt2nc9>

## How to become a member?

In order to go straight to our membership form, please use this QR code.

Please be ready to show proof of address and SEND need if asked. Also note memberships and membership number and queries are processed every Monday evenings only. Outside of these hours, we cannot guarantee a swift response.



## Mental health for Early Years Children

Help for Early Years Providers has added [new information and guidance on supporting babies and young children with their mental health](#).

The guidance:

- explains how practitioners can support positive mental health in early years children
- includes emotional and behavioural support strategies to use in early years settings
- links to further reading and resources

For more guidance on supporting children in the early years, visit the [Help for Early Years Providers website](#).

Lead person to contact in LA:  
Stacey Henderson  
Early Years Senior Advisor

Email: [Stacey.Henderson@wolverhampton.gov.uk](mailto:Stacey.Henderson@wolverhampton.gov.uk)

## Our NEW Website

Come and check out our new website, give feedback and find out more about us, the work we do and sign up to become a member @ [www.voice4parents-wolves.co.uk](http://www.voice4parents-wolves.co.uk) or scan the QR code opposite.

We hope you enjoy it as we are updating it all the time with new information. If you have any queries, comments, suggestions or feedback on the website or if you would like to see something important added, please feel welcome to email: [emma@voice4parents.co.uk](mailto:emma@voice4parents.co.uk)



## Fundraising—Can you help us raise some Funds? Do you shop online a lot?

Just letting you know that voice4Parents - wolverhampton pcf are now registered with easyfundraising, which means you can raise FREE donations for us every time you shop online. Over 7,000 brands will donate to us when you use easyfundraising to shop with them - at no extra cost to yourself!

These donations really mount up and make a BIG difference to us, so we'd really appreciate it if you could take a moment to sign up and support us. It's completely FREE and only takes a moment.

You can find our easyfundraising page at <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/voice4parents-wolverhampton-pcf/>

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### THANK YOU

A massive thank you to everyone that completed the Autism Questionnaire we sent to all Families.

We had an overwhelming 251 responses and have put all results and comments into a Report that has been sent to our partners in the NHS and Integrated Care Board to help shape an offer based on support families need for their Autistic Children and Young People.

Mags Courts, Commissioner for CAMHS and Autism lead has sent a personal thanks to the team and to all Parent Carers that not only completed the questionnaire but also attended the Coffee Morning in March to tell her about your experiences of Autism Pathways in Wolverhampton.

To take a read of the full report, please click this link:

[Autism Final Report April 2024 | Voice4Parents Wolves \(voice4parents-wolves.co.uk\)](https://voice4parents-wolves.co.uk)

### Autism Survey Prize draw Winners— congratulations

The Winners of our Prize Draw have all been notified by email:

Heidi - Fire Tablet

Kerry - Echo Dot

Helen - £10 shopping Voucher

Debbie - Sensory Bag

Lisa - Sensory Bag



### West Midlands Regional Meeting

Voice 4 Parents attend a regional meeting with other Parent Carer Forums in the West Midlands. This gives us chance to share good practice and to also see if there are similarities with feedback throughout the region. Where themes and issues are identified, this is then fed back to the National Network of Parent Carer Forums who in turn will report it to Central Government to influence change at the highest level - leading to policy changes throughout the UK.

At the April Meeting, we were presented with information on the Local Reforms to change SEND provision by standardising EHCPs throughout the country, so no matter where a family live (or move to) the offer and provision in an EHCP will remain the same - trying to put a stop to "postcode lottery".

This is in Pilot stage and is currently being tested by Telford & Wrekin; Worcestershire; Shropshire and Herefordshire. Testing is still in the early stages but the 4 areas are already developing recommendations to be fed back nationally. If you want to know more please:

To find out more please click the below link:

[SEND - Local offer \(telfordsend.org.uk\)](https://telfordsend.org.uk)



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### Help and Support in our City

- ◆ Food Banks—<https://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/benefits/social-security-benefits/food-banks-and-soup-kitchens>
- ◆ Community Shops—<https://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/cost-of-living-support/community-shops>
- ◆ The Good Shepherd—<https://www.gsmwolverhampton.org.uk/>
- ◆ The Well—<https://www.thewellwolverhampton.co.uk/>
- ◆ The Good Night Project— <https://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/cost-of-living-support/the-good-night-project>
- ◆ IASS - <https://wolvesiass.org/>
- ◆ Include Me Too—<https://includemetoo.org.uk/contact-us/>
- ◆ Sunshine Support—[Resources - Sunshine Support \(sunshine-support.org\)](https://resources-sunshine-support.org)
- ◆ Please also remember to check out our V4P Website — [WWW.VOICE4PARENTS-WOLVES.CO.UK](http://WWW.VOICE4PARENTS-WOLVES.CO.UK) and look under our 'support in the city tab' for further details.

### Power Of Words (POW) Project

This is a V4P led project based on families telling us how Words and Language used by Professionals have the power to impact families, Children and Young People. Work is now complete on the Power of Words project that was Co Produced with Outreach.

V4P Team have now presented the project to partners and are working with Wolverhampton Outreach Team to develop a full training package for Local Services to ensure that conversations are appropriate for families.

The video and further information can be found at

[The Power of Words | Voice4Parents Wolves \(voice4parents-wolves.co.uk\)](https://www.voice4parents-wolves.co.uk)

### EARLY YEARS WORKSHOPS

Contact - For families with disabled children is delighted to announce that the Contact Business Development team have some dates for online workshops for parents/carers of children aged 0 to 5 with SEND in ENGLAND.

All of their workshops are interactive, so parents will be able to ask our very experienced and knowledgeable trainers all their most challenging questions! Or you can just sit and observe if you don't like to speak up.

Subjects covered include Toilet Training, Sleep, Speech and Language, Social Communication, Money Matters, Education, Anxiety, Behaviour.

To book click below:

[Early years workshops by Contact - for families with disabled children | Eventbrite](#)

### 'Back to School' Communication Toolkit

Following the increase of measles cases in the West Midlands a 'Back to School' communications toolkit has been produced. This includes helpful advice from the NHS and the UK Health Security Agency on how to keep children healthy during the school term, and most importantly information on measles and the MMR vaccine.

[NHS Back to School Communications Toolkit for Schools & Nurseries \(mailchi.mp\)](#)

There is also a poster on flu that can be used in your schools and settings.

[Schools Flu Catch Up West Mids v2.jpg](#)

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## V4P Information / Fun day 2024

A huge thank you to everyone that attended our Information / Fun day at St Martin's Church, Bradley. To everyone that held stalls there, Sassy Sensory, Anthony Arnold, the amazing face painter and balloon modeller, Ian Brennan and every single person that attended. The day was an amazing success and the feedback we have received about it has been amazing. It was a real team effort and we are thrilled with how well it went. Thank You to you all for making it a great day!

To view more pictures from our brilliant day, please check out this link:

[Information Fun Day Feb 2024 | Voice4Parents Wolves \(voice4parents-wolves.co.uk\)](https://www.voice4parents-wolves.co.uk/information-fun-day-feb-2024)

## Useful Information Document

Please check out our new and upgraded Useful Information Document on this link:

[Support In Our City | Voice4Parents Wolves \(voice4parents-wolves.co.uk\)](https://www.voice4parents-wolves.co.uk/support-in-our-city)

If you have any suggestions to improve this or any feedback please feedback <https://forms.office.com/r/bq86NFX8wg>.

## Autism Information Video's

Following the Coffee Morning In March with Mags Courts, several Parent Carers had said they hadn't been given a useful video resource on Autism that is usually provided by the Autism Diagnostic Pathway Team Please find the videos links below, which we hope is useful to you.

### Online Videos

Animated explanation of Autism :

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6fy7qUIp8Ms>

Facts about Autism:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CaRdPYvWt48>

Facts about Autism - for children:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dUbsyd8Fnyw>

An explanation of Autism:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y6g8QHWkKZU>

Autism is...?:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l55N8AcvpcA>

What does it feel like to have Autism?:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1CNY6BbtgS8>

Tricky Friends (video for children/young people about healthy friendships)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QGkI9V-DScU>

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## Short Breaks / Respite

V4P have had several meetings over the past 2 weeks to discuss Short Breaks/ Respite Care provided to families .

We have met with Local Partners - The Local Authority, Health and Voluntary Sector Leads to discuss how Parents Concerns are addressed in Wolverhampton.

A new Working Group has been put together to look at how Short Breaks can be offered to families and how this will be accessed and delivered. We have raised that families do not want to access support through a safeguarding team.

Regionally we have raised the same concerns and sent off case studies from Wolverhampton Families that highlight concerns around Short Breaks. Other areas in the West Midlands are having similar issues so we have asked if this can be raised at a National Level and training be offered to help Parent Carers understand Social Care and legal responsibilities and rights.

## Internet Safety

The internet can be a wonderful place for people with Autism, but it can also has a dark side.

The following resource might be useful to help families learn more about online threats.

It covers the risks and opportunities on the internet for people with SEND and how to make the internet safer for them. You can find it here:

<https://www.wizcase.com/blog/internet-safety-guide-for-people-with-autism-spectrum-disorders/>

## EHCP - Quality Audits.

Invision Tool is the system currently being used by the local authority to look at quality of EHCPs. 56 Audits were carried out in March 2024, V4P have been involved in the Quality Testing of Plans and have fed back on the last round of Audits that took place end of March 2024 so this can be included in the processes to improve the quality of EHCP's.

Currently identified areas for improvement within EHCP's are:

1. Ensure provision is linked to needs and Outcomes are SMART
2. Improve the quality of Social care advice
3. Ensure plans are user friendly with non-jargon language
4. Improve the quality of sections C and G (Health)
5. Improve the quality of Section J, Personal Budgets



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### Swim Fun!

Did you know that children and young people in Wolverhampton aged eight to 15 can swim for free at WV Active Central and WV Active Bilston-Bert Williams leisure centres, and at Wolverhampton Swimming and Fitness Centre?

First introduced 15 years ago, thousands of children and young people aged between eight and 15 have taken advantage of the free swimming offer funded by the council. And, as there is no charge for under 8s, it means all children and young people aged 15 and under who live in Wolverhampton can swim for free in the city's pools! For more information, please visit <https://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/freeswim>

Councillor Jasbir Jaspal, Cabinet Member for Adults and Wellbeing, said: "Taking part in regular activities is essential for improving people's health and well-being, whether they are young or old. We are determined to do all we can to help children become more active and the free swimming programme is an important part of this."

### SEND Children's Swimming Lessons

WV Active Bilston-Bert Williams offers children's swimming lessons for 4 to 7 year olds on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays, and for 8 to 15 year olds on Saturdays and Sundays, with experienced teachers helping your child achieve the Swim England Alpha and Water Safety awards.

There will be a maximum of 2 students per lesson, and parents and carers are encouraged to be in the pool with their child.

Adult group sessions are suitable for anyone aged 16 and over with SEND, and take place at WV Active Bilston-Bert Williams on Mondays to Fridays. There will be a maximum of 2 students per lesson, with parents and carers encouraged to be in the pool during the lesson. Again, students work towards the Swim England Alpha and Water Safety awards.

Both cost £40 for a block of 10 lessons. For more information, please visit [WV Active Swimming](#)

### SEND Adult's Swimming Lessons

Our Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) adult group lessons are suitable for anyone 16+ who want to learn to swim. Our experienced teachers will help you achieve the Swim England Alpha and Water Safety Awards. There will be a maximum of 4 students per lessons. Carers will be encouraged to be in the pool with the Adult taking part in the lesson.

#### Alpha lessons:

Mondays: 1:00pm - 1:30pm  
Tuesdays: 11:30am - 12:00pm  
Wednesdays: 2:30pm - 3:00pm  
Thursdays: 3:00pm - 3:30pm  
Fridays: 2:00pm - 2:30pm

#### Water Skills:

Mondays: 3:00pm - 3:30pm  
Tuesdays: 3:00pm - 3:30pm  
Wednesdays: 2:30pm - 3:00pm  
Thursdays: 3:00pm - 3:30pm  
Fridays: :00pm - 2:30pm

Each participant needs to be booked into this session with their own profile.

10 Lessons for £40

### Wolverhampton SEND and Inclusion Strategy - finalised document

For your information - Following Cabinet approval of the SEND and Inclusion Strategy, it is now published alongside the easy read version on Wolverhampton Local Offer:

[Wolverhampton Strategy for Children and Young People with SEND | Wolverhampton Information Network.](#)

The document was written by the SEND & Inclusion Partnership. The SEND & Inclusion Partnership is a group of people who make decisions about local services for children, young people and young adults aged 0 to 25 with special educational needs, disabilities and in alternative provision. V4P work with the partnership board. The Strategy explains how Wolverhampton plan to make support and services better for Families, Children and Young People with SEND.

Voice4Parents are hopeful that now the strategy has been published that work around what families have told is needed in Wolverhampton will go ahead and make a real impact to lives.

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### THE WAY


John from The Way popped into our April Coffee Morning to ask Parents what they felt of The Way and services offered.

He took note of comments and has replied to the Team addressing Parent Carer concerns.


- Play Station has been removed so there will be no issues over technology usage in the Centre
- CCTV is in operation throughout the Centre
- All Youth Zone visitors are subject to security wand screening procedure to combat contraband and weapons. There is a zero-tolerance policy to weapons, drugs, and drug paraphernalia at the Youth Zone.
- The Way is also now a completely smoke-free facility with vapes and drug paraphernalia confiscated from young people and adults when found.

## Saturday Family Sessions

### A Welcoming Space for All!




**We love to welcome families to our Saturday sessions! From the 4th May, to ensure a fantastic experience for all, we will be separating our two distinct sessions with a 30 minute break between them:**



**10:00 AM - 12:30 PM**  
**A Safe Space for Families with SEND**

A welcoming haven for families of all ages to connect, relax, and have fun in a calm and understanding environment.





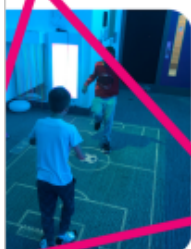
**1:00 PM - 4:00 PM**  
**Family Fun Takes Flight!**

Buckle up for the ultimate family club, where laughter, learning, and engaging activities designed for all ages await.

You're welcome to join us for either session (morning or afternoon) or even both, depending on your family's preferences and needs. We encourage you to choose the session that best suits your family's comfort level and interests.

Each session only costs 50p per person and all hot meals are free for our young people.

**We will be closed between 12:30pm and 1:00pm**



You will be asked to leave the Youth Zone in between sessions so that our team can:

- Refresh the Youth Zone: We clear up after the morning session, ensuring a clean and tidy space for the afternoon.
- Restock Supplies: We replenish supplies used in the morning session, guaranteeing a fun-filled afternoon for all!
- Revamp the Activities: We may adjust the activities to suit the afternoon's lively atmosphere.
- Take their breaks: Youth work needs lots of energy and our team need to refuel too!

Registered Charity Number 1151247

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### Preparation for Adulthood

Voice 4 Parents attend the 3<sup>rd</sup> workshop Rise Workshop around Preparation for Adulthood (PFA)

The main discussions were around

- Independent living
- Planning for the future and starting discussions as early as possible
- Person Centred Planning and the work around understanding what the young person needs is vital
- Communication and finding out about all opportunities for PFA, employment etc
- Curriculum in schools focusing on PFA/life skills
- Short Breaks and Social Opportunities
- Support from and support for families
- Young people having the opportunities to meet other young people and Adults with similar needs
- Housing
- Benefits, Welfare rights, Support packages
- Transitions

A lot of these areas were highlighted in feedback we have received from families and will feed into Wolverhampton's SEND Strategy and Health Action plan. Thank you to all families that have feedback to us, we will keep you updated on progress.

**New School Nurse Bulletins**

The 0-19 School Nursing Service has launched a new digital bulletin called 'Building a healthy future', sharing latest news from their service, alongside important healthcare messages. Check them out below:

For Secondary Students: [click here](#)

For Primary Parents: [click here](#)

For SEND Parents: [click here](#)



**NHS**  
The Royal Wolverhampton  
NHS Trust

**no=19**  
building a healthy future

Whether you are a young person, or the parent/guardian/carer of a young person, the **Wolverhampton 0-19 Service** are here to offer you advice, support and information to help you and your family be as healthy as possible.

We provide services including Health Visiting, School Nursing, and the Partnering Families Team (PFT).

**Building a healthy future this spring**



To download the latest 'Building a healthy future' School Nurse e-Bulletin



For SEND parents




For Primary parents




For Secondary students

**Carer's Assessment**

Voice 4 Parents have extensive feedback from Parent Carers around how they feel isolated, struggle to find support and how challenging life can be at times. We have been working with Carers Support Team to raise awareness of Parent Carer Assessments (now know as Carers Conversations) and for families to understand how they can get support. Please complete the following survey which will help feed into this work.



Please use this link to complete:  
<https://forms.office.com/r/wLAT2TZzxf>  
 or use the QR Code.




**Website**

[WWW.voice4parents-wolves.co.uk](http://WWW.voice4parents-wolves.co.uk)

There are a number of ways to feed back to us; using the link <https://forms.office.com/r/bq86NFX8wg>, on our website under the feedback tab or on our facebook pages.

**Follow us on Facebook:**

[Voice4Parents-Wolverhampton | Facebook](#)



**Contact us at:**

[Admin@voice4parents.co.uk](mailto:Admin@voice4parents.co.uk)